A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, November 26. 1709.

IN all your Diſputes at home between *High* Church and *Low* Church, *Old* Whig and *New* Whig, *and the like*, I have hitherto had no hand; I ſeek no Concern in your Broils, other than to reconcile them, nor any Share in your Breaches, other than to pity them, and regret the Folly of them. I am for defending Conſtitution-Right in every Branch of it, and I care not who is uppermoſt or undermoſt among you, ſo that this be but preſerv'd.

If I have appear'd vigorouſly againſt *Tackers*, *High-Flyers*, and mad Mountebank Stateſmen, that dance all upon the High-Rope, and are ever puſhing Things to Extremes, it is becauſe they fly in the Face of the Revolution, on which our Conſtitution is more immediately founded——If I have expos'd the ſcandalous abominable Practices of SOME of the Clergy, and O how few have I touch'd, compar'd to the vaſt Crowd of *Satan's* Emiſſaries that are among them, it has been becauſe, and only becauſe they fly in the Face of the Chriſtian Religion it ſelf, on which our Eccleſiaſtick Conſtitutions, if right, are all founded—— If I have oppos'd a Spirit of of Impoſition and Innovation in *Scotland*, clouded with Pretences of Conſcience and Chriſtian Liberty, it is becauſe, and only becauſe they evidently puſh at the Overthrowing the Union——on which our whole Conſtitution is now founded.

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These three Heads will take in all the Subjects I meddle with——And with your Subdivisions, I resolve to have no Concern in them, if possible to be avoided.

We have indeed a new Scheme of farther Division laid among us by a subtile Party, whose Malice against the publick Peace is evident; and I cannot but make some small Attempt to expose it——And let it touch where it will, I hope, it may carry some Conviction with it——And this is to make an irreconcilable Breach among the *Whigs* as they call them, upon a new Notion of *Old Whig* and *New Whig*——Nor let the Author of a modern Scribble, who attempts to make this his Subject, think by this, I mean what he has said on that Head——which though 'tis subtile and insinuating enough, yet is not considerable enough, nor of Antiquity enough, to lay Claim to the Original of this Thing——I shall therefore state the Case, and then in a few Words detect the Design of it. The Case is as follows.

In the second Year of the present Queen, (*for she there was something of this stirring before, yet I shall trace it back no farther*) when *High-Flying* Principles had run Things, *according to their usual Precipitation*, up to Extremity—When her Majesty was brought to the Brink of signing her own Destruction in an Occasional Bill; when a Treaty of Union having been broken off, and tacking the Toleration had laid open our Liberties, and a Popish Succession seem'd the more immediate Prospect; when by the blessed Project of this uncircumcis'd Party, her Majesty was to own Herself an Usurper, and to enjoy the Crown for Life, by the Concession of her Brother, *as they will'd him*——Which Life was all we had for our Happiness, and the Party had no more to do, but to make the Lease as short as they could——At this Time of Extremity, the Precipitation of the Party, *as generally all such rash and Measures do*, ruin'd the Cause they espous'd——And the Gulph, in which they would have overturn'd this Nation, appearing, her Majesty and the whole Kingdom took a just Alarm at the horrid Attempt——And as the Giants in the Fable assaulting *Jupiter's* Throne, were overwhelm'd by his Thunder, or as *Satan* and his Host, in *Milton's* Paradise, were thrown down from their invading the Majesty of Heaven, even so, *in their Degree*, they were immediately blasted by the wise, resolute, but moderate Resentment of the Queen, and those Loyal and Faithful Lovers of Liberty, that assisted her Majesty in the Discovery of this wicked Design.

Immediately *Tacking*, *High-Flying*, and all Manner of *Jacobite* Precipitations were cast out, and became odious to the whole Nation; Her Majesty purg'd her Household and her Councils of all the Sons of Fury, and remov'd them from her Person, and most effectually from the Administration——and the whole Nation join'd in purging the Representative——in which, *a new Election happening just at that time*, very few of the *Tackers*, *comparatively speaking*, were elected——All this, I presume, is Matter of Fact, and I dare say, no Body will contradict it.

It comes next in order to examine, who was instrumental in this blessed State-Revolution, and by what Hands it was brought to pass——And without entering into Names or Persons——I put it thus. The moderate Men, both of the Church of *England* and *Dissenters*, Men of Temper, Men of Liberty, whose Principle being honest, their Heads are clear, and their Eyes open to the Interest of their Sovereign, finding Tyranny and universal Bondage breaking in at this Gap, immediately apply themselves to the Work——It was no hard Matter to let the World see, that in the great Article of Liberty, *English men* could have *but one Interest*. The Question was not at all *Church* or *Dissenter*, but *Liberty* and *Tyranny*——Temper on both sides qualify'd them with mutual Charity for each other——In Matters Religious, and in Politick Interests, it was clear, the moderate *Church-men* and moderate *Dissenters* had but one Interest——nor have they any other yet——These were the Men form'd the Revolution I am speaking of, that join'd to overthrow *High-Flying*, Precipitate, and *Jacobite* Measures——and they have effectually done it; they pull'd it down, they keep it down, and they will keep it down, in Spight of all the Attempts of the Party to restore it.

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It comes next in my Way to let you see, what Steps are taken to diſſolve this Confederacy, and how, in order to reſtore *High-Flying*, &c. theſe fooliſh Diſtinctions of *Old* Whigs and *New* Whigs, antient and modern, &c. are ſtarted in the World—It muſt be for a Lamentation, that theſe Diſtinctions have prevail'd ſo far, and that ſome are ſo warm upon the Diviſion, that they cannot ſee the Hand that divides it—But their Power is ſhort; *Old* Whig and *Modern* Whig, *unleſs GOD ſhould once more inſpire us*, will upon all Occaſions joyn againſt *Tackers* and *High-Flyers*——Now they attempt to cajole the *Old* Whigs into a League with the *High-Flyers*—and would perſwade the World, that there are ſome Men among the Whigs *ſo mad*, as that they would rather reſtore the deſtructive Principle of *Jacobitiſm* and *High-Church*, than joyn with that hateful Thing they call a *Modern* Whig, to maintain Liberty, Union, and the Revolution.

Theſe are the Practices I ſhall now attempt to detect—I know not where the Folly will lie, but let it lie where it will, I ſhall endeavour to prove it a Folly——And I leave the reſt to Providence.

MISCELLANEA.

AND why muſt the Suppreſſing the Exorbitances of the Preſs be brought into theſe Party-Feuds, Gentlemen? You that rail ſo loud at the Liberty of the Preſs, and are yet crouding the Streets with new Papers, as if you meant to prompt the Reformation by encreaſing the Crime; Pray, how does it appear, that the *Whigs* or *Diſſenters*, or who you pleaſe, are againſt regulating the Preſs? Let us therefore tell you, that this ſeems a Scandal even upon the *Church men* only, and the Conſequence will teſtifie the Truth, as in all honeſt Caſes is very plain.

How the firſt Complaint againſt the Exorbitance of the Preſs, happens to be made by the very People that are alone, or by far moſt guilty, I know not, unleſs it be, that they ſee it muſt happen, and they would ſeem to be the Regulators——But, Gentlemen, remember by the Way, that the Author of this Paper, both by his conſtant Endeavour, as well as by ſeveral Tracts publiſh'd on Purpoſe, has always prompted the juſt Reſtraints of the Preſs—As to Method and Manner, we ſhall ſpeak of that by it ſelf——and indeed I doubt we ſhall differ there—Yet they know, the Drift of a Licenſer of the Preſs will not go down with a Nation of Liberty—And as all Sorts of Tyranny are depos'd by Law, ſo a Liberty of complaining of juſt Grievances will for ever be preſerv'd in *England*, tho' it be by Print; but I undertake to propoſe ſeveral Steps which may be effectual, both to reſtrain a licentious Liberty of the Preſs, and to ſecure to the Authors of Books their Right of Property.

Now the Gentlemen, who complain of the Liberty of the Preſs, have promis'd us a Liſt of Socinian, Heretical, Deiſtic, and Erroneous Books—which, they ſay, ſwarm in this Age——And indeed they ſay true, they do ſwarm in this Age, and their Contagion ſpreads like a Plague; and I heartily joyn with them, in moving for a juſt Regulation—and ſhall in my next propoſe ſome Methods for the ſpeedy putting a Stop to the Miſchief. But pray, Gentlemen, why may we not peaceably joyn in ſo good a Work? Why muſt you concern our Parties in this Quarrel? All honeſt Men of any Party will joyn in juſt legal Methods for reſtraining the Exorbitance we ſpeak of—Let us then not concern our Party Diviſions in it; I hope, you will not pretend to that—Theſe *Deiſts*, *Socinians*, *Flyers-to-Heaven*, *Second-thought-Men*, *Spiritual Mechaniſmers*, and erroneous Authors are *Diſſenters*—If ſo, pray, Gentlemen, when you give the World your Liſt, let them know, how many of the Authors are *Church-men*, and how many *Diſſenters*; and I am not at all afraid to tell you, it will ſoon appear, the *Diſſenters* have no Need to fear the Examination.

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If this be done faithfully—*and if it may be corrected*, it will soon appear, who have most Reason to be against the Regulation of the Press, the *Church-men* or the *Dissenters?* Nay, Gentlemen, if you will tell Noses among your selves, and see, who have fill'd the World with Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies in Print, since this hated Division of *High* and *Low* Church, you will soon see, who have most Reason to cry out for a Regulation of the Press, the *High-Flyers* or moderate *Church-men*.

But the best Way of all will be to joyn together, to obtain a Law in the present Parliament for due and just Restraints to the Press, such as to that Honourable Assembly shall seem meet, for the punishing Blasphemies and Errors already printed, and suppressing the Books of the same; for the Encouraging Learning, Arts, and Industry, by securing the Property of Books to the Authors or Editors of them; and for the Regulation of the Press for the future, against all such Exorbitances of Printing or Writing, as are justly to be complain'd of—And I dare say, all honest Men will rejoyce in this Work.

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